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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/776,414	02/11/2004	Jonathan Fanger	101896-0239	2408
21125	7590	08/01/2006	EXAMINER	
NUTTER MCCLENNEN & FISH LLP WORLD TRADE CENTER WEST 155 SEAPORT BOULEVARD BOSTON, MA 02210-2604			STEWART, ALVIN J	
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
			3738	

DATE MAILED: 08/01/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/776,414	FANGER ET AL.
	Examiner Alvin J. Stewart	Art Unit 3738

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 May 2006.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-19, 21-24, 27-40 and 65-74 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) 5, 11, 27-33 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-4, 6-10, 12-23, 34-40, 65-68, 70, 71, 73 and 74 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 24, 69 and 72 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) 1-73 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 11 February 2004 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>6/2/06</u> .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

The Examiner incorporates claims 65-74 to the elected Group I and Species A. However, the Examiner withdrew claims 5, 11, and 32 because they belong to a non-elected species. Therefore, claims 1-4, 6-10, 12-19, 20-24, 34-40 and 65-74 have been examined.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 3 recites the limitation "the spinal fixation plate" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned

with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1, 2, 5-18, 32, 34-36 and 38-40 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-17, 25, 27 and 28-32 of copending Application No. 10/664,575. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the structure claimed is essentially identical with minor substitutions of terminology such a bore for pathway and the minor preamble difference of intended use as being for a “spinal plate” in the copending application, the applicant is respectfully reminded that intended use, as set forth in the claims, carries no weight in the absence of any distinguishing structure.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-4, 6-10, 12-19, 21-23, 34-40, 65-68, 70, 71 and 74 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Landry et al US Patent 6,447,512 B1.

Landry et al discloses a guide device having at least one pair of thru bores comprising an elongated shaft (172) having a proximal end (174), a distal end (168), a guide member (100) coupled to the distal end of the shaft and including first and second pathways at least partially in communication with one another (see Fig. 20, showing element 104 in communication with each other by element 158 and by the distal end of element 100) and the distal end of the elongate shaft being offset from the first and second pathways (the elongated shaft is coaxial to the axis of element 114, therefore, the axis is offset from the first and second pathways because the three axes are parallel to each other. Therefore, the three axes are offset from each other). At least one alignment (116 & 114) element positioned distal of the guide member and a plurality of tabs (116 & 114).

Regarding claim 19, see element 158.

Regarding claims 21-22, see Open space between element 116 & 114 can be called a cut-out.

Claim 73 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sand US Patent 6,113,602.

Sand discloses a guide device having at least one pair of thru bores comprising an elongated shaft having a proximal end, a distal end, a guide member coupled to the distal end of the shaft and including first and second pathways at least partially in communication with one another. Finally, the guide member includes a first substantially C-shaped lateral sidewall and a second substantially C-shaped lateral sidewall (see Fig. 6).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 24, 69 and 72 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alvin J. Stewart whose telephone number is 571-272-4760. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 7:00AM-5:30PM(1 Friday B-week off).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Corrine McDermott can be reached on 571-272-4754. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

A. Stewart
ALVIN J. STEWART
PRIMARY EXAMINER
Art Unit 3738

July 20, 2006.